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This study was undertaken to discover the implications for the possible development of master's degree programs in education in State teachers colleges in Pennsylvania. Data for the study were secured from (1) a review of current literature; (2) a survey of master's degree programs in 42 State teachers colleges and in 80 other colleges and universities; (3) personal interviews with 38 school administrators in South-Central Pennsylvania; and (4) questionnaire responses concerning master's degree programs for teachers from 222 school administrators, 679 elementary teachers, and 834 secondary teachers located in 11 counties and the city of Pittsburgh.

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FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS, WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM IN THE STATE TEACHERS COLLEGES OF PENNSYLVANIA

- William H. Duncan
Millersville State Teachers College

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Introduction

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania maintains fourteen state teachers colleges as part of the public school system. In view of trends toward encouraging teachers in the public schools to secure professional preparation beyond the baccalaureate program, there has been wide-spread interest in extending the offerings of the state teachers colleges of Pennsylvania to include Master's degree programs for teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The basic purpose of the study was to discover implications for the possible development of Master's degree programs in education in the state teachers colleges of Pennsylvania.

Procedure

Data for the study were secured from the following four sources: (1) a review of current literature; (2) a survey of Master's degree programs in forty-two state teachers colleges and in eighty other colleges and universities; (3) personal interviews with thirty-eight school administrators in south-central Pennsylvania; and (4) questionnaire responses concerning Master's degree programs for teachers from 222 school administrators, 679 elementary teachers, and 834 secondary teachers located in eleven counties and the city of Pittsburgh.

The significance of difference between percentage was computed to discover the significance of differences between practices in the state teachers colleges and practices in other institutions. The significance of difference between percentages was also computed to discover significant differences between responses given by the various groups of teachers and administrators who completed questionnaires for the study. Chi squares were computed to ascertain that the questionnaire responses differed significantly from responses to be expected if answers were marked at random. Throughout the study significance was attached to those differences which exceeded the one percent level of confidence.

Findings

Master's degree programs in education are offered in the state teachers colleges, state colleges of education, or state normal universities in nineteen of the twenty-nine states having such institutions. More than 80 percent of the state teachers colleges in the study offered Master's degree programs in both the elementary field and the secondary field. The Master's degree programs in state teachers colleges were primarily part-time or summer school programs with approximately 45 percent of the colleges having no full-time enrollments during the regular semesters.

The survey of Master's degree programs revealed that the programs in the state teachers colleges were very similar to those in other colleges and universities. Significant differences were found in the following practices or policies:

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1. Admission requirements were more lenient among the state teachers colleges.

2. In stated minimum requirements for the degree the state teachers colleges, as a group, required less graduate credits in psychology and education and more credits in subject matter and in general education than did the other institutions.

3. Only one type of Master's degree in education was offered by 83 percent of the state teachers colleges, whereas 51.4 percent of the other institutions offered more than one type.

4. More than thirty semester hours of credit were required for the Master's degree by one-half of the state teachers colleges but by only one-fifth of the other institutions.

5. The state teachers colleges as a group were more lenient in prescribing time limits within which degree credits may be earned than were the other colleges and universities. A time in excess of six years was permitted by 45 percent of the state teachers colleges but by only 20 percent of the other institutions.

6. Larger normal instructional loads for faculty members were reported by the state teachers colleges. Normal loads of twelve or less clock hours per week were reported by 35 percent of the state teachers colleges and by 63 percent of the others.

7. The median number of volumes in the libraries of the state teachers colleges was 45,000; the median in the other institutions was 104,000 volumes.

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In the opinion of more than 75 percent of the 1,735 teachers and administrators who participated in the study, teachers need preparation beyond the baccalaureate program to meet their responsibilities effectively. A like percentage stated that most teachers show improvement in teaching proficiency as a result of participation in graduate study. The questionnaire replies indicated that the administrators were significantly more convinced of the values of the Master's degree program for teachers than were the teachers in the study.

Approximately 75 percent of the teachers and administrators in the study were in favor of encouraging but not requiring all teachers to seek a Master's degree in their respective fields and of granting salary increments for advanced professional preparation.

Approximately 86 percent of the teachers and administrators in the study considered successful teaching experience more important than the possession of a Master's degree in the selection of teachers. However, approximately 76 percent of the respondents stated that a teacher with a Master's degree was to be preferred rather than a teacher with only a Bachelor's degree if experience and other observable factors were the same.

Home and family responsibilities, inadequate salary incentives, distances to graduate schools, and need to earn supplementary income were identified as decisive factors preventing teachers from securing advanced professional preparation. Approximately 60 percent of the teachers and administrators in the study expressed the opinion that a distance of sixty miles or more to the nearest graduate school would be sufficient to discourage many teachers from enrolling in graduate study.

Approximately 75 percent of the 1,735 questionnaire respondents expressed the opinion that there is need for additional colleges in Pennsylvania to offer

Master's degree programs for teachers. Less than 12 percent of the respondents favored restricting Master's degree programs in education to the larger universities.

More than 75 percent of the teachers and administrators who participated in the study stated that they were in favor of offering Master's degree programs in elementary education, in secondary education, and in the special fields in the state teachers colleges of Pennsylvania provided the individual colleges could meet graduate school accrediting standards. Approximately 61 percent of the administrators and 70 percent of the teachers expressed the opinion that in view of faculties which include specialists in subject fields and specialists in education and in view of facilities which are especially designed for teacher education the state teachers colleges are qualified to offer Master's degree programs for teachers.

Less than one-fourth of the respondents to the questionnaire agreed that a cooperative program should be established under which a student could earn a portion of the Master's degree credits in a state teachers college and the remaining credits in the Pennsylvania State University, with the degree being granted by the university.

In the opinion of approximately 70 percent of the participating administrators and approximately 90 percent of the teachers, the Master's degree program for teachers should be designed to serve primarily as terminal education instead of as preparation for doctoral study. However, there was no indication that the program should not be flexible enough to permit planning programs as preparation for advanced study if the student so desired.

Approximately 84 percent of the teachers and administrators in the study favored admitting any successful teacher, provided he held a Bachelor's degree, to the Master's degree program for teachers. However, only 34 percent of the respondents agreed that standards of scholarship in the program should be adjusted to permit all teachers to earn Master's degrees. Apparently, they expected the degree program to exercise selection among degree candidates.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents were of the opinion that graduate study in education was of more value if preceded by teaching experience.

The average number of credits recommended by the participating teachers and administrators as minimum requirements in each area of a thiry-credit Master's degree program for elementary teachers was as follows, with averages rounded to nearest full credit:

1. Subject matter specialization: 10 credits.
2. Professional education: 6 credits.
3. General education: 5 credits.
4. Research and statistics: 3 credits.
5. Remaining credits to be taken on an elective basis: 6 credits.

The average recommendations for the Master's degree program in secondary education were as follows:

1. Subject matter specialization: 12 credits.
2. Professional education: 4 credits.
3. General education: 4 credits.
4. Research and statistics: 4 credits.
5. Remaining credits to be taken on an elective basis: 6 credits.

Conclusions

The statements of teachers and school administrators concerning influences leading to the improvement of classroom teaching and their statements concerning the vocational importance and significance attached to Master's degree for teachers are basis for the conclusion that graduate education is essential for the increased efficiency and progress of teaching in the public schools of Pennsylvania.

The statements made by teachers and school administrators concerning factors which have prevented teachers from earning Master's degrees and concerning the need for additional colleges in Pennsylvania to offer Master's degree programs in education justify the conclusion that offering a Master's degree program in the state teachers colleges of Pennsylvania would serve as an incentive for additional teachers in the state to secure advanced professional preparation.

The findings relative to the history of Master's degree programs in forty-two state teachers colleges and eighty other colleges and universities, the findings relative to the nature of the programs offered in the two groups of institutions, and the findings relative to various administrative practices and policies in the institutions included in the study support the conclusion that state teachers colleges throughout the United States are offering Master's degree programs in education which are comparable to the programs in other institutions of higher learning.

The statements of teachers and administrators concerning the type of Master's degree program which should be offered for teachers and their statements concerning the desirability of offering Master's degree programs in the state teachers colleges support the conclusion that the state teachers colleges of Pennsylvania might reasonably offer Master's degree programs in education.

Recommendations

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should accept increased responsibility for the professional preparation of teachers in the elementary and the secondary schools of the state by extending the offerings of the state teachers colleges to include a Master's degree program for teachers.

To safeguard those standards of scholarship essential in graduate study, the individual colleges should be required to meet graduate school accrediting standards prior to being authorized to offer a Master's degree program.

To avoid interference with the undergraduate program in teacher education, the Master's degree program in the state teachers colleges should be restricted to summer sessions, evening classes, and Saturday classes. Since highest enrollments in graduate study in education are customarily found in the summer sessions, this policy would meet the needs of most teachers. This policy would also discourage teachers from completing a Master's degree program prior to receiving teaching experience.

The Master's degree program for teachers should be primarily terminal in nature and should include subject matter specialization, professional education, and general education.

The admission policies should be such that most successful teachers who hold Bachelor's degrees could receive the advantage of some advanced professional preparation. Those students not meeting graduate study standards could then be eliminated after completion of a portion of the Master's degree program.